

- 7) Amend the Zoning Bylaw by modifying the affordability standards for Senior Residence Developments (Section 9B) to provide for a mix of low- and moderate-income and below-market senior residence units.
 - a) Modestly reduce the existing density bonus and require at least 10% of the units to be affordable to low- and moderate-income elders.
 - b) Restore the existing density bonus for developments that provide an additional 10% affordable units for seniors with incomes between 81-110% of area median family income.
- 8) Amend the Zoning Bylaw to provide for modest frontage waivers by special permit in the Village Residential, R-AA and Village Districts, subject to two requirements: (a) an infill lot created with a frontage waiver must meet the minimum lot area for the district, and (b) its use is limited to an affordable single-family or two-family dwelling.

COMPREHENSIVE PERMITS

- 1) The Board of Selectmen and Planning Board should jointly adopt a comprehensive permit policy, as follows:
 - a) Invite developers to use the Local Initiative Program ((LIP) comprehensive permit process instead of applying directly to MassHousing or MassDevelopment for a project eligibility letter.
 - b) Be open with developers about higher-density housing areas that are most consistent with Acton's established land use policies.
 - (1) Identify and map areas that are most appropriate for higher-density housing, such as the Village Residential, R-AA and R-2 Zoning Districts, and the Village Districts, where relatively small minimum lot sizes, two-family and multi-family uses are already allowed by right or by special permit, and areas close to transportation service.
 - (2) Identify and map areas that are least appropriate for higher-density housing, such as land in the Groundwater Protection Overlay District and the properties identified in the Master Plan as priority open space protection areas.
 - (3) Leave room for options to consider small homeownership developments (2-10 units) in other zoning districts.
 - c) Describe the zoning waivers that Acton is willing to consider, such as a realistic range of additional units per acre or a higher floor area ratio to accommodate affordable homeownership units.
 - (1) When the minimum lot size allowed by zoning is 10,000-15,000 square feet (ft²), consider a maximum standard of 8-12 dwelling units/acre, i.e., embrace the state standard and recognize that the Zoning Bylaw already authorizes an exemption for a substantially higher density in the R-AA District (Section 5.3.2.2).

- 4) Designate an individual officer of the town to negotiate with comprehensive permit applicants during the permit process or, subject to Town Counsel's approval, retain an outside special counsel to assist with negotiations.
- 5) Increase the size of the Board of Appeals from three to five members. The town needs to encourage a variety of viewpoints and provide room for disagreement by having more people involved in the comprehensive permit review and decision-making process.
- 6) Collect and organize the data necessary to estimate operating budget and infrastructure impacts on municipal and school services so the town has the most accurate information possible for negotiating with comprehensive permit developers. The same information is also required for Acton to submit a Housing Production Plan under DHCD's Chapter 40B regulations.

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

- 1) Review the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Board of Selectmen, Acton Community Housing Corporation and professional staff with respect to affordable housing review, permitting, advocacy and locally sponsored development.
- 2) Consider seeking special legislation to offer significant tax abatements or exemptions to landlords who rent market (unrestricted) units to low- or moderate-income tenants at monthly rents they can afford.
- 3) Develop criteria for identifying and selecting small town-owned and tax title parcels that may be suitable candidates for disposition and development as affordable housing.
- 4) Just as Conservation Commissions and local land trusts work privately with landowners to protect open space, Acton needs to be pro-active with owners of existing homes to create a base of scattered-site affordable housing units. Toward this end, the Acton Community Housing Corporation should consider the following actions:
 - a) Develop a priority list of single-family, multi-family and condominium properties for acquisition/rehabilitation in exchange for permanently affordable housing units.
 - b). Approach property owners about the possibility of acquiring a right of first refusal to purchase their home when they decide to sell.
 - c) Request an allocation of CPA or Inclusionary Housing revenue for a small fund to pay for refusal rights or option agreements between annual town meetings.
- 5) Using CPA and/or Inclusionary Housing revenue, or a separate cash contribution from developers, Acton town should establish a special set-aside fund to purchase Chapter 40B homeownership units upon resale if a qualifying low- or moderate-income homebuyer cannot be found within the period specified in the deed restriction.